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Salopienensis R
DIOTREPES ADMONISHED:

OR SOME
REMARKS
ON A
LETTER

From the Author of PIETAS OXONIENSIS

To the Rev. Dr. ADAMS, of Shrewsbury;

OCCASIONED BY

The Publication of his Sermon preached at St. Chad's,

ENTITLED

A Test of true and false Doctrines.

By a Parishioner of St. Chad's.

Contra rationem, nemo sobrius; et contra scripturam, nemo Christianus.
St. Augustin.

Vestra solum legitis, vestra amatis, ceteros causa incognita condemnatis.
Cicero.

*When People begin to be zealous in Religion, Satan hurries them into
Bigotry and intemperate Heats. Therefore we must take Heed, lest
when we avoid one Extreme, we be brought, by the Artifice of Satan,
to run into another.*
Henry on Matt. iv. 5.

L O N D O N :

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3 Ep. *John*, 9, 10.

I wrote unto the Church: but DIOTREPHES, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the Church.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Author of these Remarks thinks it proper to inform the Reader, that the references to the pages of Dr. *Adams's* Sermon and of the Letter to him, are to the pages as they stood in the first Edition of each; he having not seen the second. And as he endeavoured, for his own sake and the Reader's, to be as concise as he could, and therefore doth not quote at large those passages from the Sermon and Letter to which he refers, he hopes the Reader will be so kind, as to examine those passages, in the Books themselves, that he may form a better judgment of the justice and propriety of the Author's remarks.



To the A U T H O R
O F A
L E T T E R

To the Rev. Dr. *ADAMS*, &c.

S I R,

YOU will, I hope, excuse this address from one, who is a stranger to you, but hath long known and esteemed the Rev. Dr. *Adams*; yet would at the same time write impartially and tenderly.—You cannot expect a learned and accurate reply from a plain Man, who is not Master of Arts in either of our famous Universities: but he hath read something, and thought much; and cannot see so worthy and respectable a person, as the Vicar of his Parish, treated with severity, insolence and contempt,
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without animadverting upon it. And indeed it would puzzle the most learned and accurate writer orderly to follow you thro' the confusion, which appears in the whole of your letter. A few cursory remarks upon it, is all you are to expect from this quarter.

I begin with your motto from Dr. *Waterland*; concerning which I shall only observe, to say nothing of the candor of it in that connection, you would not have availed yourself of his name, had you seen a pamphlet, which I remember to have read, proving from the doctor's writings that he was an *Arminian*, and retorting upon him the charges of insincerity, which he throws so liberally on those whom he calls *Arians*.—Besides, Dr. *Nowell* hath already informed you and the world, by a quotation from him, that he thought it “not fair to suggest that when men of different sentiments, as to particular explications, subscribe to the same general words, that they subscribe in contradictory, or even in different senses. Both subscribe to the same general propositions, and both in the same sense;

sense; only they differ in the particulars relating to it, which is not differing (at least it need not be) about the sense of the article *." You will easily perceive by what I have just mentioned, why Dr. *Waterland* speaks so cautiously on that Head. But this is a matter of small importance compared with the main design of your publication. — Your compliments to Dr. *Adams* on his *able defence* of Christianity, are indeed just. But it is hard to see the consistency between them and your following representation of him. He deserves the *esteem and respect* of every Christian, whatever his particular tenets may be: and methinks this should have sheltered him from reproaches and mean insinuations from one, who professeth so great a zeal for the Gospel, and who, I presume, well knows, that the doctor as eminently adorns Christianity, as he hath unanswerably defended it.

How you can assert, or suppose, that so masterly a Writer and so *able a defender* of Christianity should write even four

* *Nowell's Answer to Pietas Oxon.* p. 96.

pages of froth and empty flourish of Words, is very strange; but I presume the true reason for that assertion was, that you felt too deeply the force of what he says in the passages you refer to [S. p. 10, 11] and found yourself included in the number of those whom he describes; and indeed the spirit of your Letter too plainly shows that you had reason to feel it. Those who are acquainted with the history of the Church, know his representation to be just.

You would have done well to have shown that the *Church and the Scriptures accord together*; for this is denied by many of the Church, as well as the whole body of Dissenters from it. But it is easier to censure than to reason. You are indeed *fully persuaded of the strict harmony there is between the sacred Oracles, and the Articles, Liturgy, and Homilies*: Others are as fully persuaded of the contrary, and have again and again attempted at least to show it. This you well know; and this, methinks, should have abated something of your positivity. Wise, learned, and good men have differed so long,
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and still differ so widely, upon this subject, that it must be no small degree of arrogance to pour forth censures on either side, and to condemn large bodies of men in a lump.

Dr. *Adams's* declaration that *the compilers of the Articles were fallible men, and that Divinity is much better understood now, than at the time of the Reformation* p. 9, was such, as I should think every Person who hath read and studied but a little of Divinity and History must acknowledge. The former part of this assertion you will not contradict, and the latter you cannot disprove. Some of the Reformers themselves allowed, that their sentiments and improvements in Religion were imperfect. For instance, *John Frith*, a man of great learning and eminent piety, and who sealed the protestant Doctrines with his blood, in his preface to his answer to *Fisher* bishop of *Rocheſter*, *Sir Thomas More*, &c. intreats his readers to examine his arguments with impartiality and receive his doctrines as far as they are agreeable to truth and scripture, without being prejudiced by the authority of
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of great men and antiquity. He then quotes the following passage from Bp. *Fisher*, whose sentiments he evidently adopts and glories in them as a considerable concession from his opponent. " My Lord of *Rocheſter* doth teſtifie himſelf, writeing upon the xviii Article, that there are manie Pointes both of the Gospels and other Scriptures, which are nowe diſcuſſed more diligentlie and more clearlie underſtand, then they have bene in tymes paſte." And addeth furthermore, that " there are diſverſe Places in Scripture ſome deale darke, which he doubteth not, but that they ſhall be more open and lighte unto our Poſteritie. For why ſhall we deſpaire of that, ſaith he, ſith that the Scripture is for that intente leſte with us, that it may be underſtand of us exactlie and to the uttermoſt Pointe?" It is evident from the ſermons and hiſtory of the Reformers, that they deſigned to have gone further, and not make what they had done the pureſt ſtandard of Reformation. Accordingly in the preface to one of their ſervice-books they ſay, " that they had gone as far as they could in
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reforming the Church, considering the Times they lived in, and hoped, they that came after them would, as they might, do more." Bishop *Burnet* saith, " the Reformation was not carried on to the perfection that *was designed* and wished for." It is strange then that their sentiments must be made a standard by which Doctrines are now to be tried; especially as some of them, when in prison, gave a summary of their Faith, for which they were ready to offer up their lives; in which they say, " that they believe the Scriptures to be the true word of God, and the judge of all controversies in matters of Religion; and that the Church is to be obeyed as long as she followed that word."——Were the doctor to relinquish his preferments, because he doth not believe every thing in the common-prayer Book and Homilies, his Parish would be grieved. And I question whether, as you assert, p. 10, " the whole Kingdom would have echoed with encomiums upon his honest upright and disinterested behaviour." Many would have laughed at his scrupulous preciseness:

ness : others would have pitied his weakness ; as they know that “ Church and State give a tacit consent and allowance to that latitude of Subscription which is pleaded for by many worthy Clergymen of our Church.” Your Party would probably have rejoiced, that such a deceiver was silenced, in hopes that one of your friends might succeed to his *rich preferments*. And some that applauded his honesty, might be shy of showing him any countenance : Witness the case of *Whiston*, who was pursued with unrelenting fury by the bigots of his time ; and more lately, of *Dr. Robertson*, now master of the Free School in *Wolverhampton*, who was cast-off by the dignitaries of the Church of *Ireland*, who professed a high esteem for him, and would have promoted him, if he would have subscribed ; but otherwise, left him to seek his fortune. Such are the rewards of honesty.

Your mention of “ the *Athanasian Creed* not being read in *St. Chad's Church*,” may be true. I assuredly know many of the worthiest persons in the Parish would be much displeased if it was read, as they
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esteem it a mysterious, unintelligible, uncharitable composition. If the Parish are satisfied with the omission, and prefer the simple Creed, called *the Apostles*, what right have you to complain? But it looks as if you intended by this remark, to remind the Bishop and Chancellor of *Lichfield* of their negligence and unfaithfulness in not prosecuting, suspending, or depriving such a Heretick. If this were your intention, it is, to be sure, very kind and catholic. But while the Principles of Liberty are so well understood, the doctor hath nothing to fear on this point, either from our civil or ecclesiastical Governours. Tho' you are credibly informed that "the Divinity of Jesus Christ hath no place in any of the doctor's sermons;" yet it is well known by his Parishioners, that he doth insist upon it at particular times, and did so in the course of his Lectures on the Church Catechism, as well as mentions it constantly when he reads the Prayers and especially the Doxologies of the Church. And can you reasonably charge a minister, with denying the Divinity of Christ,

meerly because he doth not read the Athanasian Creed? Another circumstance in vindication of the doctor I must inform you of, if you do not indeed know it, viz. that when he published a collection of Psalms, from the versions allowed by Authority, for the use of his Parish, he added, after the 117th Psalm and at the close of the Book, the *Gloria Patri* or Doxologies, tho' these are not enjoined by the Church to be used in its Psalmody, nor was his subscription and assent to them required. These he neither omitted, nor altered from the common Phraseology. They plainly express the Divinity of Christ and the Spirit: and yet they have been and sometimes are sung in St. Chad's Church. So that upon the whole your *credible Informer* p. 10. hath deceived you and lost his credibility. Methinks a person desirous not to belie and misrepresent, should have more carefully examined and have been sure, what is preached, read and sung in St. Chad's Church, before he declared that he *could not help believing* that the *Vicar had a settled dislike to the trinitarian doctrines*. For
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my own part, I cannot help believing, that, as Archbishop *Tillotson* saith, " the Bigots of all parties have got a scurvy trick of *lying* for, what they call, the Truth." If you have ventured to read the Works of the *renowned Tillotson*, you well know, that tho' he wished the Church fairly rid of the Athanasian Creed, yet he was an able Defender of the Divinity and Atonement of Christ, and had many bitter Things written against him on that Account. But one would think the stiffest Trinitarian would wish to get rid of that Creed, on account of its damnatory clauses, tho' he believed all the rest of it ever so firmly; that out of the same Mouth might not proceed blessing and cursing, but that he might lift up holy hands without Wrath.

What you call *a fundamental mistake*, p. 11, in supposing that "*Man wants no assistance but the exercise of his own Reason to find out the Nature and Attributes of God*," will appear to be true, if it be rightly considered and understood. That Man can by his own Reason discover so much evidence for the Being and Per-

fections of God, as to convince him that there is a God ; that he is perfectly wise and powerful, holy, good and true, and that he is to be worshipped and served, is most evident, not only from the writings of the Heathen Philosophers, but from an express assertion of *St. Paul*, *Rom. i. 19, 20*, " Because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them [or to them] for God hath shewed it to them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood [or being duly attended to] by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse, because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God." Here *St. Paul* asserts your *fundamental mistake*. The Creation loudly proclaims God's Nature and Attributes to all men ; so that if they neglect to reverence love and obey him, they are without excuse. But surely they were excuseable, if their own Reason was, as you assert p. 13, incapable to form *any Judgment* of the Nature and Attributes of God. I fear, when you
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reflect upon this passage, you will be ready to number the Apostle among your *rational divines*. If your assertion be true, I should be glad to be informed, how we can be sure that we have any revelation from God, and that the Bible contains the sacred Oracles of Truth? "To me it seems to be undermining the principles and foundation of natural Religion and taking away the *only sure* test and criterion of the truth and excellency of revealed. For if men have *no* previous natural notices of a supreme Being, by which to judge of what *may* or *may not* be supposed to come from him in a way of more extraordinary communication, the credit of all pretended Revelations is manifestly put upon the same footing. Every thing is to be received as a Revelation, which a confident Enthusiast or Impostor may call such: or rather the very supposition itself of *any such thing* as a Revelation is rendered absurd and ridiculous."* The Passages you quote in defence of your strange assertion are

* *Coventry's Philemon to Hydaspes*, Part IV. p. 23.

evidently misapplied. As to the text in *Job* xi. 7, *Canst thou by searching find out God?* [there you artfully stop] the context shows, that it refers to the dispensations of his Providence, that it is impossible to find out all the reasons and designs of the Divine Conduct. So it follows “ canst thou find out the Almighty *to perfection?* ”——When the Apostle says, “ the world by wisdom knew not God,” he doth not mean, by their Reason, but that with all their boasted improvements in Wisdom and Philosophy, they did not know him, i. e. practically and seriously know, worship, and obey him. But this was not owing to an insurmountable ignorance, or the real defect of their intellectual powers, but to their wickedness, as he asserts in the passage quoted above. They were inexcusable, for they might have known and served him, if they would rightly have exercised their Reason. This must be *St. Paul's* meaning, or he must contradict himself.——When our Lord says, “ no man knoweth the Father but the Son,” the meaning is, that no creature knoweth him

him truly and fully ; nor can any one know him to saving purposes, without some revelation of him from Christ, which even Heathens may have ; else our Lord would assert, that there can be no knowledge of God at all but by Revelation, which contradicts both Experience and Scripture. In the same Verse, *Matt. xi. 27*, it is said, “ no man knoweth the Son, but the Father ;” which plainly intimates, that there is something inexplicably mysterious and incomprehensible in the Nature and Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose name is called *wonderful* or *secret*. I remind you of this, as it shows, that it must be great pride and presumption for any to pronounce dogmatically and positively about the precise Nature of the blessed Jesus, and censure and condemn their brethren, who think differently about it.—Is there no difference between attaining *some* knowledge of the Nature and Attributes of God, sufficient to lead us to the practise of our duty, and perfectly understanding them ? These you seem to confound, p. 12. I most readily submit to the *Apostle's* determination, but
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not to your interpretation of it. He saith 1 Cor. ii. 14, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God;" but he means the animal *sensual* man, as the word is elsewhere rendered; the man who is under the influence of irregular appetites and passions, and especially spiritual pride. And I think, *Solomon* asserts the same when he saith, "a scorner seeketh wisdom and findeth it not."

The Deists are much obliged to you for furnishing them with some objections against the Divine authority of the Bible, grieved as you are *with the sad growth of Deism and Infidelity in this day*, p. 4. And very probably in the next Deistical Book your strange and shocking Harangue p. 14, 15, will be quoted with great applause, as *Tindall* hath done several such passages from other inaccurate and intemperate writers. His answerers, as well as others, have sufficiently shown, that those dispensations of Providence, which you represent as contrary to Reason, are capable of a full vindication on rational principles, and were, in those particular circumstances, Actions
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or Appointments worthy of God, and subservient to the most important purposes. Reason would have given her *vote and verdict*, p. 14, had she known all the Circumstances relating to them. There is some difference, sure, between setting *Reason on the Throne*, p. 12, and trampling it in the Dirt. But this reminds me of the remark of a judicious Writer, "when a man finds that Reason is against *him*, he will be against Reason."

Your sneers at rational religion, p. 13, 16, are very unbecoming a man and a scholar. Is *your* religion irrational? Would you have a religion without reason, or reasoning? Is not Reason to judge of the sense and meaning of Scripture? or, what doth our Lord mean, when he reproves the *Jews* for not judging of themselves what is right? Why doth the Apostle command Christians, and even those who had received the Spirit, "to judge what he said, as became wise men; to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good; to try the Spirits," &c? Can this be done without the exercise of our Reason? Your *rational divines*, I am persuaded,

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suaded, *believe every jot of God's Word, simply upon the authority of its infallible Author*, p. 16. But they must reason, before they can know that he is the author of it, and that it hath the stamp of his infallible authority. They must reason about the meaning of versions or originals, and how the words were used by the writers of that age. Is not this way of writing and talking about Reason and depreciating the distinguishing glory of our nature, *a clog and impediment, causing Christianity to be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence* to many? And after you have undesignedly laid such a block in their way, you must be obliged to Dr. *Adams*, or some other *able defender* of Christianity, to remove it; otherwise, they will stumble and fall at it. But "Wo be to the man by whom the offence cometh."

Your Interpretation of the sentence upon fallen man p. 18, I apprehend to be wrong. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," or in dying thou shalt die:" means, thou art by this transgression become mortal, and art under a sentence of death and condemnation. And
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with all the pains you take to show the absurdity of the Dr's interpretation of those passages which refer to the consequences of the Fall, his reasoning, S. p. 32, 33, remains unconfuted. The texts you quote p. 19, in confutation of what you suppose to be the Dr's principles, are, many of them, little to your purpose. Would you examine them carefully, attend to the contexts and the sacred writers' evident design, you may probably find, that several of them refer to the case of the Heathen World, others to the case of the *Jews*, and describe the general character of each, at the time when the Gospel was preached to them. Others refer to the Apostles only: and none of them will prove the doctrines you espouse, according to your manner of stating and expressing them: And that they are capable of other interpretations, hath been shown by learned commentators and divines; both those who are of Dr. *Adams's* sentiments, and those who fall in more with the opinions of the Reformers in general: this hath been shown, I say, without *torturing, twisting and wire-*

drawing them, &c. which St. Peter intimates, is generally done by the *unlearned and unstable*, neither of which characters belong to the Dr. and therefore they cannot bear you out in being so very confident.

Your quotations from the Articles, Liturgy, and Homilies, I pass over. The BIBLE, the BIBLE is my religion. "If they speak not according to that Word, there is no light in them." The compilers of them were *fallible men*, just emerged out of the darkness of Popery, with strong prejudices about them, and it was natural enough for them to run from one extreme to the other.

Your censure of the Dr. for blaming it as an exceptionable passage that "God hath no mercy but thro' Christ the Redeemer," is very unjust. You afterwards quote it, p. 23, that God can *show* no mercy but thro' Christ the Redeemer. But there is a plain distinction between *having* no Mercy, i. e. in his Nature, and not *showing* it but in a particular way. Some others, besides the Dr. *can throw dust in the eyes of their readers.*

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He could mean no more than this, as appears by his own words, S. p. 18, 19, that we are not to attribute God's merciful disposition towards his sinful creatures to what Christ hath done and suffered, as what led and inclined him to be propitious and make offers of Grace. The atonement and merits of Christ and our Salvation by him, illustrate the kindness of God. His mercy was the *cause*, not the *effect*, of Christ's undertaking and death. The texts the Dr. quotes, S. p. 19, most plainly prove this. And the texts you quote, that there is *no other foundation, no other name by which we can be saved, and without shedding of blood there is no remission*, by no means contradict this; for they only assert that there is no other way of Salvation but thro' Christ, and that they to whom the Gospel is preached, can only obtain it by faith in his name and in his blood. In this way God chose, for the wisest ends, to show mercy to sinners. But that he *hath none without a Redeemer, none out of Christ*, (which I believe was Mr. Romaine's phrase) none in his nature, but is unpropitious

pitious and irreconcilable without the interposition of another to make him merciful, which must be the meaning of his expression, or at least would be, and was, so understood by his hearers, is surely a very rash and *exceptionable passage*, and directly contradicting both Reason and Scripture. As to those who are strangers to the preaching of the Gospel, they may be saved by Christ without an express faith in him; even as a Slave may be redeemed by a sum of money, without knowing the generous Benefactor to whom he is obliged for it. If any of the Heathen are not saved, it is their own fault; they will be, as the Apostle expresseth it, without excuse. If they are saved, it will be thro' Christ; and it may be time enough for them to understand their obligation to Christ for it, when they come into the other world. I think Bishop *Burnet* hath well stated this point. He observes "when it is said, *there is Salvation in no other, and none other name under Heaven whereby we must be saved*, the meaning is, that it is only on the account of, and in consequence

quence of, the death of Christ, that sin is pardoned and men are saved. This is the only sacrifice in the sight of God. So that whosoever are received into mercy, have it thro' Christ, as the channel and conveyance of it. But it is not so plainly said [indeed there is nothing like it said in Scripture] that no man can be saved, unless he hath an explicit knowledge of this, together with a belief of it. Few in the old dispensation could have that. Infants and Ideots cannot have it; yet it were a bold thing to say, that they may not be saved by him. So it doth not appear that none shall be saved by the death of Christ, unless they do explicitly both know it and believe it, since it is certain that God may pardon sin upon that score without obliging all men to believe it, especially when it is not revealed to them. Since God hath not declared they shall be damned, no more ought we to damn them." And again, " God applies the death of Christ, by the secret methods of Grace, to many persons whose circumstances do render them incapable of the express act of laying

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ing hold upon it." *Burnet on art. vii. and xviii. p. 100, 172, &c.* Let me add the sentiments of another respectable writer, Mr. *Baxter*, " It was not the knowledge and belief of Jesus incarnate personally, that was made necessary to all before his coming; and therefore not to all afterwards. *No man ever came to the Father but by Christ's merits.* But Christ never meant, that no man before his Incarnation or since, that never heard of him, did come to the Father without believing that, which the Apostles themselves long believed not, after they followed Christ. If all men are damned who believe not that this Jesus personally is the Christ, all before his Incarnation must be condemned. But if not before, then the same thing was never made necessary after, to all that could not possibly hear of it."

Mr. *Romaine's* crude expressions, *little sins* and a *little God*, must be offensive to every serious mind that heard him. And give me leave to say, that your attempt to defend them p. 24, 25, is a meer quibble, and not becoming a Master of Arts, who I suppose learnt logic at *Oxford*. You
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both allow that *some* sins are more heinous and aggravated than others. Therefore, some are great and others comparatively little. Nor doth Dr. *Adams* think, that any sin against God is, properly speaking, a little one. But surely the phrase may be innocently used as well as the phrases *greater* and *lesser matters of the law*, by Christ. There may be a distinction made by a Christian Divine between great and little sins, without *establishing the exploded Notion* of the Papists about *venial and mortal* sins, of which Dr. *Adams* saith nothing, tho' you would persuade your readers, that he is of the same mind as the Papists. A sin little in itself compared with others, may be mortal. Our Saviour saith, *If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloke for their sin*, John xv. 22. They, tho' *Jews*, knew not God who sent Christ, v. 21, which explains what the Apostle meant by the Heathen not knowing God, not duly regarding, loving and serving him. Our Lord means, that if he had not spoke to them, their sin would have been *little*, in compari-

son with what it was, in consequence of his preaching and working Miracles among them. Here a perverse opponent might argue as you do, " Can any part of the holy just and good law of God, be called a *little matter*? Must not that argue that we have little thoughts of God, p. 25? There cannot be a more effectual way to open the flood-gates of licentiousness than by talking of *having no sin*, of *little duties* or *matters of the law*; that law, which threatens death and a curse to every one that continueth not in all things contained in it." Thus you might have cavilled at our blessed Lord himself. But I am weary of tracing you thro' these subtleties.

You are pleased to assert, p. 26, that " It is certain there were no other dispensations from all eternity but the Law and the Gospel." But what were the dispensations to *Adam*, *Noah*, *Abraham*, *Job*, &c? Surely this is rash and inaccurate: And your censure of the Dr. for saying and unsaying (I pass by the rest of your genteel language) is very unjust. For he makes an evident distinction between Salvation

vation by faith and works, as the meritorious Cause of it, when he speaks of the Merits of Christ and denies the Merit of our own works and obedience, S. p. 20. It is enough to make your readers smile, to hear you talk of pursuing *him thro' the windings of his labyrinth*, who is remarkable, and almost unequalled, for his clearness and precision. For my own part I am greatly puzzled and unable to pursue you thro' all your winding mazes, were I disposed to do it; and I have not yet met with a person, who could understand your plan, after they had carefully read your former productions. But accuracy and precision are not to be expected even from *Masters of Arts*, if they quote Scriptures by sound, and do not chuse to reason about them.

It seems to me very ungenerous and illiberal to charge the Dr. with inconsistency in representing Repentance and Obedience, as the terms of our Pardon and Salvation, and at the same time mentioning the Atonement and Merits of Christ, as the ground of our acceptance. Polemical writers may wrangle endlessly

about the phrases, *Terms, Conditions, Demands, Qualifications, &c.* but this doctrine is plain to the capacities of the doctor's Parishioners, that we cannot be pardoned without Repentance and Faith in Christ, and cannot be finally saved without good Works and Obedience : and yet that our Forgiveness upon Repentance, and our final Salvation, is to be ascribed, not to any merit in our Faith, Works and Obedience, but to the merits and intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ. This the Dr. allows : this he preaches. And this is enough for us to know, without entering into those nice distinctions, with which systematick writers have puzzled themselves and their readers, subverted the Faith of some, and destroyed the Edification of many. To the poor the Gospel is to be preached, and therefore every thing necessary to Salvation must be, and is, plain and clear.—Were the Dr. to assert, that amends could be made to God and pardon obtained for our Sins, by Repentance and better Obedience p. 22, a little candor would have shown that his Meaning was not, and could

could not be, obnoxious. That he doth not mean any *proper amends or compensation* on our part, is plain; for he asserts the contrary, S. p. 18, 19, which you, to lay the heavier load upon him, chuse to overlook. When God, in the covenant of Grace is pleased to accept our Repentance, Faith and sincere Obedience thro' Christ, it may surely, without any offence to a candid reader, be called making *amends to God* considered as the *moral Governour of the World*, tho' it be no way profitable to him, especially as he requires this as the condition of our final Salvation.

Your charging the Dr. with *artful evasion* and *notorious slander* with regard to what he saith about original sin, will have no weight, with those that consider the case impartially. If your doctrine, which you call the doctrine of the Church, is true, "Men are consigned to the punishment of the next world, for no other crime but being born in this;" for they could not be born in this without being the descendants of *Adam*, and if they are his descendants, they are, upon your principles, liable to the punishment of the
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next for *Adam's* sin; which is no crime of their own, except it be a crime to descend from him. It is your opinion, indeed, that "all children baptized or unbaptized who die before the commission of actual sin are undoubtedly saved thro' Christ." The Church of *England* saith, "It is certain by God's word that the children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved." This is not so clear to many, as to pronounce it *certain* from the word of God. But here you exceed the Charity of the Church, to which I have no manner of objection. It is certain that many of the Calvinistical persuasion have asserted what the Dr. hath intimated, and the doctrine is as absurd and shocking, as it is unscriptural.

You represent the Dr. as differing both from the Bible and the Church in saying, "that the love of God and our Neighbour are natural to the mind of man." p. 33. But what is the law, which *St. Paul* saith, is written upon men's hearts, if the love of God and our Neighbour be not part of it? Why do men's consciences
accuse

accuse them, for affronting and disobeying God and injuring their Neighbours, if they are not, with regard to these objects and the duty owing to them, a law to themselves? You charge him p. 17, with *supposing thro' his whole Discourse, that the Will is in a state of absolute freedom as to the choice of good or evil*. What secret meaning you may have in the word *absolute*, I know not; the Dr. useth it not. He only asserts that "we have a power or will to refuse the evil and choose the good." You charge him also with supposing thro' his whole Discourse, that "*the Affections are at least as inclinable to exercise themselves in the love and pursuit of heavenly as of earthly objects*." But doth not the Dr. suppose the contrary, when he acknowledges S. p. 26, "the depravity of mankind and their natural propensity to evil?" Yet because he doth not carry that depravity so far as you do, he is condemned. But if a man hath neither an Understanding to discern, nor a Will i. e. a natural power, to chuse, good and evil, he is in effect a *meer Machine* or a *meer Beast*, not a rational creature

ture, a moral agent, or accountable to the supreme Being. The Dr. recommends to his hearers, S. p. 38, " to implore the grace of God's Holy Spirit to assist and sanctify their endeavours, and to rely at last on the merits of Christ for acceptance:" this seems very different from those high notions of man's natural excellency and free Will which you charge him with p. 20, and is perfectly agreeable to Scripture. I wish, Sir, you would for once try your hand at reasoning, and confute what the Dr. saith, S. p. 24, " If we have not the power of doing good, have we the power of doing evil? But this power cannot be without the other. To be guilty of sin implies the power of not committing it. To chuse the evil is to refuse the good. Whatever we do from necessity and not from choice, can neither be morally good nor evil." If you can show this to be contrary to common sense, fair reasoning, the general feelings of mankind and the whole strain of scripture, I shall have no doubt but that the University of Oxford will confer upon you, *speciali gratiâ*, the title of D. D. or L. L. D. on account

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11

House and Place of Prayer."*.—The principal design of your Book is, to prove him guilty of Insincerity, Prevarication, &c. in subscribing Articles, and assenting to Creeds and Forms of Worship, which he doth not believe. But he pleased to consider, that he again and again subscribed, and declared his assent to, the sixth Article of the Church, as well as the rest; which saith, "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to Salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an Article of Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to Salvation." As he firmly believes and strenuously asserts this, he cannot be considered, nor is he considered by the intelligent part of his Parish, as subscribing and declaring his assent to the Articles, &c. any further than as in his judgment they agree with Scripture. And to subscribe with this liberty must be allowed him, unless you will suppose that the Articles are inconsistent with themselves.

* Homily on the time and place of Prayer. Part II.

He sees and considers them in a different light from you : and you well know wise and learned men have differed about the meaning of them, and the latitude with which they are to be subscribed, ever since they were first published and enforced : So little have they done, or will do, to prevent diversity of opinions ! Dr. *Adams* hath undoubtedly a right to judge for himself in what sense he takes them, and with what latitude he subscribes them ; and “ what hast thou to do to judge another man’s servant ? ” He hath published his sentiments plainly to the world, S. p. 35, *note* ; and instead of using many opprobrious phrases concerning him, and his brethren, who *subscribe to Forms which in their first appearance they cannot approve*, you should have shown, that it is not your *duty to judge charitably of those*, who in “ subscribing the same Forms, assume a liberty of differing from you in the manner of interpretation, and for which licence they may now surely plead the tacit consent and allowance both of Church and State.” I suppose, Sir, that when you were matriculated and took

your degree at *Oxford*, you subscribed, or swore to observe, the Statutes of the University. Now, if some Books which I have read, particularly *Terræ-filius*, do not deceive me, you then actually subscribed or swore to things, which you did not, and could not believe, or things which contradict one another; at least to practise some things, which you could not practise, as a Protestant or an *Englishman*; particularly to say *Mass**. I pretend not to judge of that author's assertions: but if this were really the case, be pleased to favour the world with an account, how you satisfied your own conscience, and could evade the charges of Insincerity, Prevarication, &c. and then yourself will contribute to vindicate Dr. *Adams*. I presume you have been *whitewashed*, p, 48.

Can you in your calm thoughts possibly suppose, that any considerate Clergyman, who subscribes the Articles and declares his unfeigned *assent and consent to all and every thing contained and prescribed in and by the book of Common Prayer, &c. together with the Psalter, &c.* does thereby testify

* *Terræ-filius* N^o. iii, xvii.

his

his approbation and commendation of every Rite and Ceremony, every part of the Rubrick, every Matter and Thing, every Point and Syllable in the whole book from beginning to end, and in every page and line of it?——Do the Clergymen of your Sentiments mean all this, without any limitation or reserve? If they do, they must subscribe and declare their unfeigned assent and consent to notorious contradictions. I will give you a specimen or two. There are several mistranslations in the Psalter, as it stands in the Common Prayer Book, which can never be said to be agreeable to the Word of God. See Psalm cv. 28, in the Bible and the Common Prayer Book, which evidently contradict one another. The sixth Article declares, “ In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority never was any doubt in the Church.” Now, (not to mention that there was many years a doubt in some Churches about the authority of several of the Epistles and the Revelation) I would observe, that in the Common

mon Prayer Book, the *Apocrypha* is called *Holy Scripture* : For after the Direction at the beginning, how the Psalter is to be read, follows a direction how the rest of the *Holy Scripture* is to be read ; from whence it plainly appears, that the Apocrypha must be included in that phrase ; and from thence one would naturally suppose the Compilers meant to call it a part of the Old Testament. In the preface also (which is part of the book assented to) they speak of the reading of the *Holy Scripture* in general ; tho' some lines afterwards they add, " or what is agreeable to the same." In the Homilies, which every Clergyman subscribes as *a godly wholesome doctrine*, and which you censure the Dr. for differing from, it is said, " The Holy Ghost in sundry places of the Scripture saith," and then some Passages are quoted out of the Book of *Tobit* (Hom. of Alms Deeds part ii) ; the lies and foolish tales in which book can never be said to be inspired by the Holy Ghost. Surely, if they consider and understand what they subscribe and assent to, they must see that these are contradictions : and therefore must have some limitation

tation exception or reserve with which they do it. And who hath a right to determine how far such limitations exceptions and reserves are to be carried, and how far they are honest, how far they are insincere, evasive and prevaricating? It is well known that, after the *Act of Toleration* passed in 1689, when the *Nonconformist* Ministers subscribed the doctrinal Articles of the Church as the Act required, many of them gave in a brief explanation of their sense of them at the time of subscription, in which they widely differed from your sense of them; and yet their explanation was admitted by those who had authority to receive their subscriptions. Mr. *Baxter* in particular in his explanation said thus, " I take not this form of words called the *Articles* of the Church of *England*, to be essential to the said Church; nor any thing in them to be essential to the Christian Religion, which was not so from its Beginning and in the first Ages of Christianity; yea, and in every following Age. Knowing that the ambiguity of words doth leave an uncertainty in the sense of most human Writings

ings till explained, and yet supposing that the Authors of those Articles meant them orthodoxly, that I may not seem needlessly scrupulous, I subscribe them ; and that I may not be unconscionably rash in subscribing, I here tell all whom it may concern, how I understand the words which I subscribe."——Now, if Dissenting Ministers were allowed to put their own sense upon the Articles, and a sense, which it seems highly probable, if not certain, was different from the sense of the compilers and the imposers of them, it seems hard, that at this time of day, a Clergyman of the Church of *England* should be censured for subscribing them in a like different sense. The tacit allowance of our Governours in Church and State to such a different sense, may naturally be supposed and taken for granted, considering that they have never taken upon them to prosecute those, whose Writings plainly show they differed in sentiment from the Compilers. Excuse me, Sir, if I enlarge a little more on this subject, as you lay so much stress, thro' your whole letter, upon it. In p. 45, you charge

charge the Dr. with " explaining the Articles and Homilies in such a manner and with such a latitude, as to give them a direct contrary Interpretation from the original intent of the Compilers." Now here it may be said, that you cannot be sure that the Compilers were all of the same mind. Bishop *Burnet*, who was the most accurate inquirer into the History of the Reformation, says, " that when the Liturgy was confirmed by Parliament in the Reign of *Ed. VI.* 1549, eight Bishops protested against it, and four of those Protestors had *concurred in composing the Book.*"* A shrewd sign, that even they were not thoroughly satisfied with every thing in it. It is very evident that almost all the Reformers, excepting *John Rogers*, and *Fox* the Martyrologist, were thoroughly in the principles of persecution. It grieves me to mention *Cranmer* and *Ridley* in this Connection: but alas! such was the power of their old prejudices, that even *Cranmer* over-persuaded the young King, against his inclination and

* Abridg. of Hist. of Reform. B. 2. p. 72.

judgment, to sign the warrant for burning *Joan of Kent* a poor insane Enthusiast. Besides her, the Bishops condemned and burnt *George van Parre*, a *Dutchman*, for Heresy, tho' a Man eminently devout and of a most exemplary Life and Conversation. And for these cruel proceedings, they alledged the authority of Scripture. I say not this, to cast any odium upon the memory of our excellent Reformers; but only to prove the truth of what *Dr. Adams* asserts, that they were *bad interpreters of Scripture*, which expressly condemns such unjust and anti-christian practices. If, after they had seen, and some of them felt, so much of the bloody spirit of Popery, and had studied the Bible, they could not see the absurdity and iniquity of putting men to death for conscience sake, all their other Tenets ought cautiously to be examined by Scripture, and not implicitly submitted to and pleaded for, because they were their's.—Nor can you be sure that the Archbishops and Bishops &c. and the whole clergy in Convocation, who agreed upon the Articles, &c. in 1571, were all exactly of a mind. I
have

have no doubt, but those who are acquainted with the writings of these Divines, could easily show, that they did not entirely agree in their Sentiments. Indeed Dr. *Nowell* hath shown it at large in his Answer to *Pietas Oxoniensis*, p. 71, &c. and your laborious attempt to confute him and prove the contrary, only proves, that the Reformers differed from *one another*, and sometimes from *themselves* : which is an evident proof of the truth of what Dr. *Adams* saith of them ; and is a substantial unanswerable reason, why little stress should be laid on their Opinions, and why they should not be made the standard of Orthodoxy. Some of them might only agree to the doctrines in general. And those that agreed to what they thought the capital doctrines of Christianity, might have some doubts and differ about the more abstruse points of speculation, especially about the doctrine of Divine Decrees, that unfathomable depth. It is well known that when the *Act of Uniformity* was passed, there were different sentiments among the Clergy about the latitude of subscribing. For as

Bishop *Burnet* saith, " tho' the words of the subscription, (which were also to be publickly pronounced before the Congregation, declaring the person's unfeigned *assent and consent*) seemed to import this, yet the clause of the Act that enjoined this, carried a clear explanation of it. For it enacted this declaration as an assent and consent to *the Use* of all things contained in the book." Others understood it differently. The learned Bp. *Sanderfon* was applied to by some Divines, who desired his judgment about the following declaration or form of subscription, which they said they could agree to, *viz.* " We are persuaded, that the constant doctrine of the Church of *England* is so pure and orthodox, that whosoever believes it and lives according to it, shall be saved; and that there is no error in it, which may necessitate any man to disturb the peace or renounce the communion of it." When the Bishop had read and considered this declaration, his answer was, " I never subscribed to any other sense myself.*"

* Life of *Chillingworth*, p. 168.

Here

Here is one of the first dignitaries of the Church and the most judicious Casuist of that age, who had studied the point of subscriptions and oaths and their obligation perhaps more diligently than any other man ever did, practising and allowing that latitude, which you condemn. I have it from undoubted Authority that it is common with our Bishops, when persons come to be examined in order to their ordination, to enquire what Books they have read; and particularly whether they have read *Burnet on the Articles* and to recommend that Book to their perusal. Now every one who hath read that Book, will naturally infer from hence, that the persons appointed by Law to receive the subscriptions of the Clergy, do allow a latitude. If the Clergy in these days subscribe Articles, &c. without believing every thing in them, they may subscribe to the use of what is contained in the book; or as expressing their agreement with the Doctrines of it in general, as Bp. *Sanderfon* did; or as a proof of their conformity to the Church of *England* and a test of their obedience to their
 su-

superiours, who require this of them, as the legal way to Preferments in the Church. It is no wonder there have been so many different views in which men have subscribed, since it is next to impossible to frame thirty nine Propositions, of such a length as the *Articles*, in any human words, to which a number of conscientious Clergymen, no larger than that, by whom the Articles were agreed in 1571, could give their hearty assent and consent. To which I may add, the difficulty, if not the impossibility, there is for any judicious cautious Divine to declare that every thing in the three Creeds may be proved by *most certain* warrants of Holy Scripture. I much question, whether there be a Clergyman in the Kingdom, who, before his subscription and declaration, read over the Articles, the whole Book of Common Prayer and the Books of Homilies deliberately and seriously, weighing carefully every Sentence, Clause, Word and Syllable. Or if any one should do so, I question whether he could subscribe and declare his assent to every thing in them,

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in the sense and manner, which you think necessary in order to free him from the charge of Insincerity, Prevarication, Evasion, &c. For my own part I should scruple to subscribe and declare my unfeigned assent and consent (according to the Idea you have of so doing) to the very best translation of the Holy Scripture itself, or even to any copy of the Bible now extant in the world. For it appears to me, from the writings of learned men, who have studied these matters (as far as my acquaintance with them reacheth) that there is no translation, yea no copy, either of the Old or New Testament so perfect, but what may have such slips, errors, faults of transcribers or printers, various readings, &c. as may make an unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained in it, a matter of rational scruple to a person of a tender conscience.* Upon the whole therefore it seems very plain, that some latitude in subscription hath been taken and allowed from the first, and must

* *Kannicot's* account of his Collations. *Dr. H. Owen's* Enquiry into the present state of the *Septuagint*. *Mill's* N. T. Pref. and var. Lect. &c.

be and will be taken and allowed. Who then is this Champion, that undertakes to demolish all these *Goliaths*, as Hypocrites and Enemies to the Church, and without any authority divine or human, pronounces peremptorily, and with the infallible air of the Pope, who are and who are not sincere; tho' alas! it is too evident from his letter to Dr. *Adams*, that he hath not quite slain *the Lion* and *the Bear* in his own Bosom?

You mention as a parrallel case, "our Judges explaining away *Magna Charta*. p. 45." But surely, the Judges may defend and support *Magna Charta* in general, and as far as is necessary for the security of Liberty, without agreeing with the compilers of it, or with one another, in the sense of every article, clause and word of it. You know, Sir, that Justices of the Peace are bound by their Office, the King's Commission and their Oath grounded upon it, to *cause to be kept all Ordinances and Statutes made for the good and preservation of the peace, &c.* yet many of these are absurd, obsolete, and cannot, and ought not to be kept and executed.

Even

Even the worst that ever was made, the Law for burning Hereticks, stood unrepealed for above a Century after the Papal Power was abolished in the Kingdom. The Act of Parliament also which made Witchcraft and Enchantment Felony, and punished it with death, was made in *James I.* and was not repealed till about the year 1736. With regard particularly to the former Act, were not the Justices of Peace in the several Reigns after the Reformation till it was repealed, obliged by their Oath of Office grounded upon the Commission, to put this Act in Execution even against their protestant Brethren? No, saith one of them, "the Act was unreasonable and bad in itself; the compilers and enactors of it were *fallible men*; the principles of the Gospel and the rights of conscience are *better understood since that time*. It is not for the good of the peace; and our Legislators give, and have long given, a *tacit consent* and allowance to its suspension: And it must be a *pain and grief* to *ingenuous minds* to take an Oath, which at *first appearance* binds them to do what they think

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wicked

wicked and cruel." But might not a fiery Jesuit, who wanted to be at the old work of burning Hereticks, have replied, in almost your own words, "Sir, this is *directly contrary to the original intention* of the compilers and enacters of that Law, and *destructive of the very design and institution of your Oath*, p. 47. They no more thought that any honest ingenuous minds would call the searcher of all Hearts to bear witness, that they would cause to be kept the Law for burning Hereticks, *if they did not* (ex animo) *believe it to be just and right that they should, than they thought that Perjury and Piety, Truth and Falshood, were synonymous Terms*, p. 48. You thus explain away the laws of the Land, kick this stubborn long exploded Act of Parliament quite out of doors, and new varnish the Kingdom upon the more polite and rational plan of modern politicks." p. 45. Thus also might this and the rest of your declamation against Dr. Adams have been used concerning the act against Witchcraft; and it may now be used concerning other Statutes of Parliament, which are obsolete, iniquitous, and cannot now be kept, and yet are not repealed

pealed. Nay it is probable that Instances might be produced of *Justices of Peace* now, who in a very laudable zeal to punish and restrain immoral and disorderly persons and practices, sometimes stretch the Laws and go beyond the letter of them, which is apparently contrary to their oath. In this Case, a Person of your Spirit might write against such *Justices* and bring against them all your Charges of Infincerity, Prevarication, &c. against Dr. *Adams* and his reasoning Brethren. The authority of a noted Judge, even *Lord Chief Justice Holt*, may be produced, in one instance at least, to justify this assertion, that "tho' the Law was strictly one way, yet, Practice having been otherwise, *Communis Error facit Jus.*" Agreeably hereto, I am told that it is a rule in Law, *Lex currit cum praxi.* It may therefore reasonably be supposed, and hath been generally held, that the Practice of the Church must expound her meaning. It is very well known, that some of the highest Churchmen have, in their answers to the Nonconformists, understood and expounded the terms of conformity with a latitude,

and have asserted the necessity of a *favourable construction*. And indeed, this *favourable construction* the authors of the *Preface to the Common Prayer Book* desired and expected for themselves, "as what in common equity ought to be allowed to all human Writings, and even the very best translation of Scripture itself." The Application of this to Dr. *Adams* and his reverend Brethren is easy. And why the Clergy should not have some indulgence allowed them, as well as Judges and Justices of Peace, it is hard to determine.

As to what you say, p. 46, 47, of there being "never more real piety and practical godliness in the kingdom, than when the doctrines of the Reformation were preached in their purity," I own I do not understand to what time you refer. Surely not to the days of the Reformers; for the Bishops *Jewel*, *Latimer* and *Sandys* give a very different account of those days; especially *Latimer*, whose Sermons are in so many hands. And the turnings and windings of the Clergy in general in the reigns of *Hen. VIII.* *Edw. VI.* *Mary*, and
Eli-

Elizabeth, prove, that there was not much real piety among them. If you refer to the time of the Inter-regnum between the death of *Charles I.* and the accession of *Charles II.* perhaps you may be nearer the truth; but a staunch defender of the Common Prayer and Hierarchy would scarce allow this. What other period you refer to, I know not. But methinks, when there are so many of the established Clergy, and dissenting Ministers, and such a number and variety of Lay-Exhorters, who are so often preaching what you call the doctrines of the Reformation, in almost every part of the Kingdom, and they have so many Hearers, it seems hardly reconcileable and consistent to say (tho' even with a *perhaps*) "that there never was less real Piety and practical Godliness in the Kingdom that at present," and yet "that the Effects which follow the preaching these doctrines are so signal and glorious as you represent, p. 49."

Your Remarks on "the effects which follow preaching those doctrines, which you call true and those which you esteem false, p. 49, &c." are not easily understood,
nor

nor can they be reconciled with facts. I fear there is no room to boast on either side. What inward communications, sensations, consolations and hopes they that believe your Creed feel and experience, cannot be judged of by those who read your writings, or those who know the persons to whom you particularly refer; tho' perhaps had they better learnt the first lesson in Christ's school, to be *humble* and *poor in Spirit*, they would not boast or even talk of these things so much, as they are well known to do. As far as men's conduct comes to the knowledge of their neighbours, friends and acquaintance, by which alone (as their fruits) we can know them, I must observe, that if you mean to assert, "that all *rational Divines* and their followers and friends are destitute of the fruits of righteousness and the comforts of religion; that they do not show their faith by their works, nor live sober righteous and godly lives; and that all the Calvinistical Divines and their followers do," you must be very ignorant of the world and contradict the most notorious *facts* and *experience*; or you must be very un-

uncharitable. And if the latter be the case, which I very much fear, it will be easily accounted for, why, among the blessed effects of real Christianity, you never mention that "Love which is the fulfilling of the Law, and which, if a man wants, tho' he understand all mysteries and all knowledge and have all faith, yet he is nothing, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 2." This will account for it, why among the effects which your doctrines of truth produce in the heart, you never mention these; "that they open it in Charity and Love to our Brethren, subdue a narrow bitter Spirit, teach us not to judge and condemn our brethren, but to receive those that are even weak in the Faith, but not to doubtful disputations: that they lead us to esteem others better than ourselves, and restrain that pride, insolence, and self-confidence, which the zealots of a party are too apt to manifest." Where true Christianity prevails in the Heart, it preserves men from thinking themselves righteous and despising others; and will never allow them to say to those that differ from them in sentiments, Stand by thyself, I am holier than

than thou. This is a *distinguishing Test of true and false Doctrines*, which you have *entirely passed over in silence*, and yet it is *evidently given in scripture*, p. 49.—May I not ask you, Sir, do the Prayers and Services in the Liturgy, which you so highly extol, contribute nothing to form men to the Temper, and inspire them with the Consolations you describe? Or shall one or two Sermons of a rational Divine on a *Sunday*, always prevent the good effects, which joining in those services again and again, perhaps daily, tends to produce? Or will you venture to say, that none of these good effects are produced by the labours of those, who think differently from you and your party, and who preach what you so confidently call, an *earth-born System*, p. 51? I hope you are a wiser man and a better Christian than to assert this, after you have considered the question. If comparisons were not odious, and entering into private characters invidious and base, it might not be impossible to mention instances of those, who believe and contend for, what you call, *the pure Doctrines of the Gospel*, who are no credit

dit to any party, but have proved scandalously immoral. This Town hath furnished too many Instances of this kind. Perhaps some zealous Preachers of these pure doctrines might be produced, who have been as censorious, *fretful, angry, and impatient under provocations*, as any *rational Divines*; as eager after the *friendships, honours and preferments of the world*, p. 51. and taken as scandalous methods to procure or keep Benefices, as any of their heterodox brethren. The Publick hath lately had too much laid before it on this latter subject. I am truly grieved when scandals happen and offences come, from whatever quarter of professing Christians; but while there is so much room to recriminate, it is better to be silent on this head. And I heartily wish that all those, who have that knowledge and experience which you describe, may act a consistent part, and by an humble, meek, exemplary conduct prevent their good from being evil spoken of. *Then we may be certain there is sound faith and right principles at the bottom*, p. 53; otherwise, all their profession and zeal is nothing.

I

Your

Your remark on the Dr's compliments to those concerning whom he writes, p. 53, is very mean and illiberal. All his intimate acquaintance, at least in this Town, know, that what he saith of himself is true, and indeed much less than the truth: and if it were not for hurting his singular modesty, I could give you several instances, in which he hath behaved respectfully to those who are called *Metho-dists*; defended their character when it hath been attacked; shown his displeasure at those, who have railed at them and sneered them; endeavoured to prevent and restrain insults, which the Mob were offering them; and done many acts of beneficence and compassion to them. In this respect he hath shown *his faith by his works*, and fulfilled the law of Christ in loving and doing good to his enemies. He may think these people in a dangerous error. They think him so. Yet he hath treated them much better than they have treated him; and by *this fruit* you may know him. Another *true scriptural Test* which you have passed over in silence!

You

You intimate, p. 52, that the Dr's *compliments* and *concessions* concerning the *pious and virtuous lives, and the zeal, of the Ministers against whom he writes*, overthrow his own plan. But how doth this follow? May not the plain principles of the Gospel, those that are necessary to Salvation, which are perhaps common to *all* parties of Christians, have such a powerful effect, thro' the influence of divine Grace, on some of each, as to produce the fruits of righteousness, tho' they widely differ from one another concerning what is *sound*? Will no Principles, but the distinguishing Tenets for which you contend and which are so very doubtful, produce these? It is by no means a *flagrant contradiction to say, that such a one is a very good man, but of very bad principles*. You will hardly deny that *Thomas a Kempis, De-renty, Fenelon, Rollin, and some other Papists*, were very good men; yet they did not believe the *distinguishing Tenets of the Reformation*, which in your opinion, are necessary to make men good. Besides, it is very obvious, that a man may hold Principles dangerous in themselves to

his religious Temper and State, and yet not see, or not act agreeable to, all the bad consequences of them. Many Persons Hearts are better than their Heads, and they may be habitually under the government of some Principles, which may produce piety and zeal, tho' they rather seem in their preaching and writing to establish the contrary Positions: and one may apply to them, what our Lord said of his Disciples, "if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them."——Their zeal may not be *according to knowledge*, yet by no means be *a horrible crime*: for it may and I believe doth, terminate in this, to convert and edify Souls. I am persuaded they are less zealous upon the whole, to profelyte men to a particular set of Notions, than to lead them to Repentance, Faith and Holiness. Christ may be preached *out of envy and strife*, as well as *good will*. Some may preach Christ *of contention*, not *sincerely*; others *of love*. But *whether in pretence or in truth*, still *Christ is preached* and good is done. Therein Dr. Adams, with the Apostle Paul, *doth rejoice*, (tho' he cannot approve those Minister's manner
of

of preaching him, and the spirit they too often manifest in their preaching) and therein also every good man *will rejoice*. *Philip*. i. 15—19. I have not penetration enough to see the *flagrant contradiction*, which you so perfectly discern, in the Dr's representation. It seems to me quite consistent.

Be pleased, Sir, with your inquisitorial eye and spirit, to *pry into the ingredients of the Dr's dose*, p. 54, and neither I nor he will think you *an officious examiner*. And if you can find yourself, or produce clear evidences of, any inconsistency between *his congratulations of himself* (as you, not very civilly, call them,) *on his Candour, Charity and Forbearance* and his conduct to the Persons in question, I will acknowledge there is some justice in your insinuations. Otherwise I must pronounce them, and the impartial world will pronounce them, false and scandalous. It is strange that a Gentleman and a Scholar should so rudely treat one, and a Clergyman too, who treats every one with civility and good manners. But it seems, as if you also *were joining hands with the Church of Rome*

Rome in *establiſhing that long exploded doctrine among all ſound Proteſtants*, p. 24, that “Faith is not to be kept with Hereticks;” at leaſt, which is ſomething akin to it, that neither Juſtice, Civility, nor common Decency are to be ſhown them. And it is well your Power doth not extend further than to ſcourage them with your tongue and your pen; elſe our worthy Vicar would ſtand a bad chance.

And now, Sir, after theſe curſory remarks on your letter, which I hope may contribute to prevent the ill effects of it, at leaſt upon my fellow pariſhioners, give me leave to make a few ſtriſtures on the general ſtrain and tendency of it: and then I will leave it to any impartial, candid perſon to judge, whether it be wrote with the ſpirit of a Gentleman or a Chriſtian.

Dr. *Adams* had his Education at *Oxford*, was a hard Student, a Fellow of his College and a Tutor there. Near forty years ago he was preſented to the living of *St. Chad's*. Since that time, he hath behaved in the moſt unexceptionable, worthy, and honourable manner; ſo that amidſt all the rage of party madneſs, which hath ſeveral

several times infected the Town in this period, his character stood unimpeached. He hath been stately resident in his Parish, till he had the living of *Counde* presented to him; and since, hath honestly divided his time and labours between them. His Sermons have been judicious, and practical: and he hath taken great pains with the Children of his Parish in catechising and instructing them; particularly by Lectures on the Church Catechism on Sunday-evenings during the Summer, which have been attended by great multitudes. He hath laid himself out vigorously to promote the prosperity, sobriety, good order, and regularity of the Town; and been one of the first in all acts of charity and compassion without distinction of Parties. If he hath not done so much for his Parish, as you perhaps may suppose he ought, he hath given you some of his reasons, S. p. 35. I believe there never was a Clergyman presiding over so large a Parish, consisting I suppose of about 5000 Souls, who was more generally respected and beloved by them, and even those of different Sentiments and De-

Denominations, to whom he hath always behaved with almost unparalleled moderation, candour, and good nature. He could never stoop to any indirect or unbecoming methods to gain any of his Preferments, which are not so *rich* as you insinuate, p. 9 : the revenue of *St. Chad's* principally depending on the voluntary contributions of the Inhabitants; and if it be indeed a rich Preferment, it is so much the more to his Honour. He hath been diligently studying his Bible and labouring for the publick good above forty years, and hath no enemies, but Bigots and Incendiaries. I know the Dr. will be grieved and offended to find one of his Parish thus publicly asserting, what all the rest, who know him, will allow to be true. But this was really necessary, in order that the Publick may judge between him and the Author of *Pietas Oxoniensis*. This, Sir, this is the man, on whom you have thought fit to pour out your indignation; and all, because he differs from you, and some of your favourite Preachers, in points, which have been disputed from the first Ages of Christianity, and will be disputed till

till the end of Time. You are, it is said, a Gentleman of rank and fortune ; you are a Master of Arts in one of our famous Universities ; you have enjoyed peculiar advantages for knowing the world and mankind, and attaining a polite, decent, and genteel behaviour and address. I remember when I was at school, to have learned, as I presume you did, this distich,

*Adde quod ingenuas didicisse fideliter Artes
Emollit mores, nec finit esse feros,*

which I wish you would please to recollect. And yet to such a Gentleman and Divine, as Dr. *Adams*, whom yourself acknowledge p. 4, *to have an indubitable claim to respect and esteem*, you write with scurrility and mean insinuations about his views and designs ; take upon you to censure him as insincere, prevaricating, &c. and dictate to him as if he were a child or a fool. And with all these marks of a bad spirit, pretend a great zeal for God and the Church of *England*. But *the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God* : and whether you, Sir, or the Dr. are truer friends to the Church and brighter orna-

ments of it, let the Publick judge. Were I a real enemy to the Church of *England*, I could wish its defenders to write like *you*, and its enemies like Dr. *Adams*. A different example of writing he hath shown in his Answer even to Mr. *Hume**. As a servant of the Lord he durst *not strive, but was gentle; shewing all meekness to all men*; and I heartily wish you would, in this respect at least, imitate his example. Is there not reason to suspect that the design of your manner of writing is, to prejudice his Parish and Friends against him, and lessen his esteem and usefulness? For certainly if yours is the cause of truth, and a well regulated zeal moved you, there would be no need of so much acrimony to support it. But what you say of the Dr. will, I imagine, appear more justly applicable to yourself, that you endeavour *to cast an odium on what you cannot confute*, p. 4.

—Whoever hath read and impartially considered this and your former productions, and the aspersions you have therein thrown upon some of the noblest names

* See Dr. *Adams*'s Answer to Mr. *Hume*'s Essay on Miracles. 3d Edit.

our Country ever produced, will, I apprehend, see reason to apply to you, and persons of the like spirit, those words of *Shakespeare*,

They feed upon opinions, errors, dreams,
And make them truths: They draw a nourishment

Out of defamings, grow upon disgraces ;
And, when they see a virtue fortified
Strongly above the battery of their tongues,
Oh, how they cast to sink it ! and defeated,
(Soul-sick with poison) strike the monuments
Where noble names lie sleeping, till they sweat
And the cold marble melt.*

You may think me unjust in having sometimes spoken of *your Party* by way of distinction, since you have declared, that “ *you utterly disavow all connection with Sects and Parties,*” p. 54, yet you are so strongly attached to those persons, who are just in your own way of thinking upon some points of Divinity, and write so severely of all others, that, if this be not a plain evidence of your being *connected with a Sect and a Party*, I know not what is. You say, that you are con-

* viz. Tillotson, Clarke, Sykes, Hoadley, &c. &c. &c. &c. &c. vid. *Pietas Oxoniensis*, p. 69.

cerned to vindicate the *Interests of Religion in general*. This is commendable; therefore I honour you; tho' I apprehend your notions of Religion are too narrow, and your charity too confined. You add, *and the Interests of our excellent established Church in particular, i. e.* as the following words seem to intimate, *its Doctrines*. A learned Bishop of that Church saith, "It is a scandal to the Church of *England* to suppose, that it hath any *peculiar Doctrines* considered as the Church of *England*. She hath expressly declared that she knows no other Rule but the Gospel; always appeals to that, for the truth of any thing taught by her, and expressly requires all in her communion to take the Scriptures for the rule of Faith and Practice. Consequently, the certain truth of any Doctrine is not put, by our reformed Church, upon its being the Doctrine or peculiar Doctrine of the Church, but of the Scripture." I recommend this Remark to your serious consideration, lest out of zeal for the Doctrines of the Church, you show as great a *Disaffection* to the Scriptures, as you assert

Dr.

Dr. *Adams* hath shown to the Church of *England*; and perhaps vilify and mangle the sacred Oracles, as you say he hath done the Doctrines of the Church, p. 54, 55. Let me add, when you declare that all protestant Churches since the Reformation have exploded the Doctrines of Free Will, &c. (p. 54, n.) you forget the Remonstrant Churches in *Holland*, and some other places, who were not ashamed to avow them in the face of the Sun, and who suffered a grievous persecution with great patience and firmness for their avowal of them.* But perhaps, notwithstanding this, you will not allow them to be Protestants or Christians; tho' I hope better things of you.

Allow me, Sir, to propose a few Questions to Mr. *Romaine* and other Clergymen, who are your particular friends, which I hope they will candidly and coolly consider. Whether their way of preaching and acting, which Dr. *Adams* principally disapproves of, is adapted to give men a favourable opinion of those doctrines for which they are so zealous; or rather

* *Brandt's* Hist. of the Reform. pass.

whether it doth not tend to prejudice their hearers against them and to drive them into the opposite extreme, as I know assuredly hath been the case, and have been much grieved to observe it? And indeed it is natural it should be so. "Whilst some opinions (saith a very judicious writer) are carried to such an immoderate height, as expose the absurdity of them to the view of every body but those who raise them, not only Gentlemen of Literature, but others of common sense, many times see thro' them: and then out of indignation or an excessive renitence, not separating that which is true from that which is false, they come to deny both, and fall back into the contrary extreme, a contempt of all religion in general*." It appears to me from their preaching and writings, with which I have some acquaintance, that they speak and write in such a manner, as to confirm those, who deny or doubt, the depravity of human Nature, the necessity of Regeneration by the Spirit of God, Justification by Faith, and Salvation by Grace, in their opposition to these

* Rel. of Nat. del. p. 60.

evangelical Doctrines, or their dislike to them. These Ministers use such rash and incautious Expressions, especially concerning *Faith, Works* and *Obedience*, as lead many to conclude, that they are destroying the foundation of Religion; and, in the warmth of their zeal against the self-righteous Legalist, seem to set themselves as enemies to the holy Law of God. They give such Interpretation of some Passages in the word of God, as are, at least appear to many of their Hearers to be, utterly inconsistent with its general strain, and subversive of its grand, leading, glorious Design, namely, to make men holy in all manner of conversation.—I would beg leave to ask them more particularly, whether they act prudently in delivering their peculiar sentiments in crude unguarded expressions (as Mr. *Romaine's* at St. *Chad's* certainly were) and with so much confidence, in Pulpits to which they have access, and from which different sentiments are generally delivered? Whether they would be pleased, that Dr. *Adams* should, with equal warmth, vent his heretical principles in their respective Pulpits? Or whether

ther they would not loudly complain of him for so doing?—Whether it would not be more becoming them, as Christian Preachers and friends to the Souls of men, to speak with modesty and candour in such Pulpits; to insist entirely, at least principally, on the indisputable doctrines and duties of religion? When a christian Minister preaches occasionally, it is not inconsistent with integrity and fidelity to his Master, but incumbent on him in prudence and as he desires to do good, to insist only on the points of Religion generally acknowledged: yet in his own Parish, he should think himself obliged to declare the whole counsel of God, which he cannot possibly do in one or two occasional Sermons, and give them a clear view of *all* the Doctrines of the Gospel, according to the best Idea he can form of them.—I would propose it to their consideration, whether this would not be acting more like their divine Master and his holy Apostles, who taught men as they were able to bear it; condescended to their prejudices; “became all things to all men; that they might gain some;” endeavoured
to

to engage their esteem; and fed them with milk, when they could not bear strong meat; not directly and violently attacked their favourite notions, but by insisting seriously upon the general principles of religion, and by meekness and gentleness, endeavoured first to gain their attention and win their hearts, and then to rectify their errors? Whether by this method they would not be likely to do more good, and remove those prejudices, which many pious and worthy Clergymen and Laymen have entertained against their sentiments, because they see the promulgation of them attended with so much imprudence, heat, and uncharitableness? — Whether they should not seriously consider, that “the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated?” and that to judge and condemn our brethren, that an uncharitable censorious spirit, are as inconsistent with the Gospel and the hopes of Salvation, as any insincerity or prevarication whatsoever?*

L

But

* A fellow-labourer of yours in this *dirty* work of accusing and censuring, hath shown himself so zealous to expose Dr. *Adams*, that he ridicules and sneers
him

But I chuse to express this thought in the words of a writer, to whom, it is said, you are no stranger, and with whom, for your own sake and those whom you write against, I wish you were better acquainted. "*Judge not that ye be not judged*, says our blessed Lord, in his Sermon on the Mount. And there is not a more distinguishing mark of real Christianity than the observance of this command; nor a more evident proof of a reprobate mind than where no regard is paid to it.—Let a man make what pretences he will to Religion, let him fancy himself possessed of a sanctity as far above his Neighbours as he pleases, yet if at the same time he harbours in his breast a spirit of uncharitableness, and vents this spirit in rash judgment upon others, arrogantly and presumptuously taking upon him the office of the searcher of hearts, that man's Religion is vain; he is deceiving his own

him for the manner in which his Sermon was paged by the *London-Printer*, tho' it is a very common one. From this single circumstance the Reader will judge, whether such a wretch is not too contemptible to deserve further notice, and what honour can accrue to any Cause by such a Champion and such a manner of pleading it. See *Gospel Magazine for Jan. 1770.*

Soul, and would do well to consider, whether he himself is not in danger of those anathemas, which he is so liberally bestowing upon others."*

I would propose it further to inquiry, whether your attempt in your late publication, to prejudice the Parishioners of *St. Chad's* against their Minister (for I can scarce consider it in any other light) and the like attempts made by your particular friends among the Clergy, to prejudice other Parishes against their Incumbents, be likely to promote the interest of true religion? Many of them cannot, and others of them will not, hear any other Preachers; and if they are taught to look upon their own Pastors as heretical and unsound, enemies to and underminers of the Church of *England*, what advantage are they likely to reap by their instructions? Will not this be the consequence of such censures, among the weaker part especially, that they will pay no attention to the publick or private admonitions of their Teachers, but contract a dislike for publick worship, and so lose the benefit of the Prayers of

* See a friendly caution against rash and uncharitable judging, printed at *Shrewsbury*, 1764. Price 1 d.

the Church and throw themselves out of the way of the Divine Blessing? If you do not see that this is likely in the nature of things to be the consequence, it must show a pitiable weakness : But if you see this, and yet will proceed in censuring and condemning so many of the established Clergy, for difference of Sentiments only, it shows something worse. You will perhaps plead, that you do not censure and blame Dr. *Adams* and others because they differ from you in sentiments about some Doctrines, but for prevarication, &c. in subscribing Articles, &c. which they do not believe. But really this comes to the same. For have not they as much right to put *their* sense upon them, and subscribe them with such a Latitude, as they think just, agreeable to Scripture, and allowed by the Governours of the Church, as you have to put *your* sense upon them, to determine what is the sense of *the Church*, and deny such Subscribers this Latitude? But I will press you no further on this Head, only leave the Reader to compare your Letter to Dr. *Adams* with the above quotation from the *Friendly Caution*.

Let

Let me, once more, ask, whether the abusive reflections which you and your friends are so often and so publicly throwing upon the *renowned Tillotson*, and other of our best practical Writers of the Establishment, is not likely to do great mischief; by prejudicing persons against Books, which are in so many families, by which multitudes have been instructed and edified, and by which all may be profited, if they will read them diligently? May not they thus be led to forsake the Church, and run into the wilds of Enthusiasm, or the pestilent errors of the *Antinomians*? Would a real friend to religion and the Church of *England* wish to see this, or use means that seem adapted to produce it?

Whether Dr. *Adams* will condescend to publish any Remarks on your Performance I know not. It seems most probable to me, that he will decline it, for the same reason that “*Michael* the Arch-Angel durst not, in contending even with the Devil, bring a railing accusation against him,” because he knew the Devil would be too hard for him at railing. You will scarce allow the Dr. to *reason*
with

with you, and you will be too hard for him at other weapons. His temper is too good, and he understands the Gospel too well, to return your language. I have thought it my duty to him, to his master and mine, and to my neighbours, to plead his cause and that of piety and charity as well as I could. And this I have done without his having the least knowledge of it.

As from your *N. B.* at the end of your letter (by which it appears that you can write such another in about a Week's time) and from your controversy with Dr. *Nowell*, it is pretty evident you will not soon be tired, nor easily convinced, I here take my leave of the Controversy. If I have used any unbecoming language even to a traducer of the Vicar of my Parish, whom I esteem highly in love for his work's sake, I shall be ready to make due submission. I know who is called, *the accuser of the Brethren*; and I would not be like him. I would humbly recommend to you the following passage of Mr. *Baxter*.* “ It is a most dangerous thing for a *young convert* to be ensnared in a Sect. It will, before you are aware, pos-

* Directory Part I. p. 40.

fells you with a feverish sinful zeal for the
 opinions and interest of that Sect. It will
 make you bold in bitter invectives and
 censures against those that differ from
 them. It will fill your very Prayers with
 partiality and human passion. It will se-
 cretly bring malice, under the name of
 zeal, into your minds and words. In a
 word, it is a secret but deadly enemy to
 christian love and peace. Let them that
 are *wiser*, and more *orthodox* and *godly*
 than others, show it as the Holy Ghost
 directs them, *James* iii. 13, &c. Who
 is a wise man and endued with know-
 ledge amongst you? let him show out of
 a good conversation his works with meek-
 ness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter
 envying and strife in your hearts, glory
 not, and lie not against the truth. This
 wisdom descendeth not from above, but is
 earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envy-
 ing and strife is, there is confusion, and
 every evil work. But the wisdom that is
 from above is first pure, then peaceable,
 gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of
 mercy, and good fruits, without partiality,
 and without hypocrisie. And the fruit of
 righteousness is sown in peace of them
 that make peace."

Give

Give me leave to assure you in the close, that I am neither *Arian*, *Socinian*, *Pelagian*, nor *Arminian*, as far as I know what those hard words and terms of reproach mean. I differ from the Dr. in my sentiments of some doctrines of the Gospel, and passages of Scripture; and approach nearer to you. But however we differ, I doubt not but you will heartily join with me in offering up the following excellent Collect of our Church: "O Lord, who hast taught us, that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our Hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which, whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."*

I am

4 AP 65

S I R,

Your sincere well-wisher,

SALOPPIENSIS.

* Collect for the Sunday before Lent.